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Parental Role Construction and Parental Involvement in Children's Education

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Abstract

Following a model suggesting that parental role construction fills specific functions in the parental involvement process (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; in press), this study examined parents' role construction as related to children's schooling. A sample of 74 parents of public elementary school children participated in focused interviews about their involvement ideas and activities. Interview transcripts were subjected to analysis according to a coding scheme including three components of role construction: a) parents' values, beliefs, goals, and expectations related to their children's development and education, b) parents' ideas about their responsibilities and reported behaviors in day-to-day education, and c) parents' ideas about their responsibilities and reported behaviors related to major decisions in the course of the child's education. Data were also gathered on parents' sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed in school, teacher ratings of parent effectiveness in helping the child, and child achievement. Analyses of over 9,000 coded statements from interviews suggested systematic patterns of links between the values and behavioral components of role construction, and between components of role construction and measures of parental efficacy as well as teacher-rated parental effectiveness and child achievement. Cluster analyses revealed varied patterns of role construction associated with higher and lower child achievement. Results are discussed in terms of research implications and suggestions for parents and schools as related to parental involvement in children's education.

Parental Role Construction and Parental Involvement in Children's Education

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Theorists, researchers, and practitioners have suggested that parents' ideas about their roles in children's education influence their decisions about involvement in children's schooling (e.g., Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Clark, 1983; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, in press; Lareau, 1989; Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, & Dornbusch (1993). Chavkin and Williams (1993), for example, included parents' role ideas in their examination of parents' involvement in education (e.g., "I should be responsible for getting more involved in my children's school," "I should make sure that my children do their homework" [p. 75], as did Ritter et al. [1993], e.g., "[I] believe teaching is best left up to teachers" [p. 115]). Clark (1983) identified parental behaviors reflecting belief in the importance of a strong, *personal* role for parents in children's schooling as one key to higher achievement among his sample of low-income African-American adolescents. Eccles and Harold (1993) included parents' role ideas in a model of contextual variables influencing parent and teacher practices of involvement; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) identified parents' role construction as a critical variable influencing parents' basic decisions about involvement in children's education. Despite these empirical and theoretical suggestions, however, little inquiry to date has focused directly on parents' role construction or its functions in guiding parental engagement in children's schooling.

The purpose of this study was to examine parental role construction as related to parents' involvement in children's education. We sought to understand the dimensions of parents' role constructs, and of patterns characterizing those constructs, as a first step in assessing the function of role construction in parents' involvement decisions, activities, and, ultimately, their effectiveness in helping their children succeed in school.

Role theory in general suggests that roles are socially constructed sets of expectations held by groups for the behavior of individual members (e.g., a family's expectations for a mother's behaviors, a school's expectations for the behavior of parents); they are also sets of behaviors characteristic of specific kinds of group members (e.g., fathers of elementary school children) (see, for example, Babad, Birnbaum, & Benne, 1983; Biddle, 1979; Forsyth, 1990; Gross, McEachern, & Mason, 1958). Schwartz (1975) described roles as incorporating behavioral expectations derived from individuals' social statuses (e.g., parent, teacher) and the accompanying obligation experienced by individuals to behave in ways expected of persons in the role.

Characterized by social construction--a process of definition involving interactive processes between a group and its members (e.g., a family and its adult members; a school and its teachers, students, and parents)--roles are also described as composed of three relatively distinct elements (e.g., Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Gilbert, Holahan, & Manning, 1981; Harrison & Minor, 1978; Levinson, 1959). One element includes structurally given demands, often operationalized as a group's expectations for individual members' behavior (e.g., what do *others expect of me* in my role as the parent of a school child?). A second element includes personal role conceptions--the individual's personal understanding of behavioral expectations for persons in this role (e.g., what do *I expect of myself* in my role as a school child's parent?). The third element, role behavior, includes the behaviors in which the individual role-holder engages (e.g., what *do I do* in my role as a school child's parent?) and those he or she expects to engage in as a role-holder (e.g., what else *should I do* [or would I like to do] in my role as a school child's parent?).

Roles are also characterized by their orientation toward the accomplishment goals held by groups and their individual members (e.g., the socialization of the child, the child's learning of

mathematics). They include attitudinal components--the values, goals, and expectations held by individuals consistent with the groups to which they belong; they also include behavioral components--the actions that individuals take (or anticipate taking) as they fill the socially constructed expectations they perceive for appropriate role behaviors.

A parent's ideas about the role he or she should fill in the child's education are developed through multiple experiences as a member of groups relevant to parenting responsibilities. These experiences often include observations of one's own parents, as well as peers' parents, during childhood and adolescence; the development of personal ideas about the values, goals and behaviors that should be associated with the parenting role; the emergence of parenthood and accompanying responses to related demands and expectations expressed by extended family, friends, other groups to which one belongs, and one's children. Through personal adoption and development of values, goals, expectations and guidelines for role behavior, parents construct roles for themselves with reference to their child-rearing responsibilities. These role constructions include historically derived values, goals, and expectations for behavior, as well as ideas that grow from active engagement with important groups (formal and informal) of which the individual is currently a member.

Given these tenets of role theory, we sought 'windows' on parental role construction in relation to parental involvement in children's schooling. We did so because role construction appears particularly important to parents' involvement in children's education insofar as it seems to establish the basic range of activities that parents will construe as important, necessary, and permissible for their own actions with and on behalf of their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; in press). Accessing parents' role construction through reports of their thinking and activities related to children's schooling, we sought to map the terrain of parents' ideas about the behaviors in which they engage--and believe they should engage--as parents of children in school.

The first part of our process included a search in the literature for indicators of the goals, values, and expectations that characteristically guide parents in this culture as they raise their children, with particular reference to schooling. A significant body of research has suggested that a) parental values, goals, and expectations about children's development guide parents' behaviors with children (i.e., precede rather than follow child behavior; e.g., Goodnow, 1988; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1992; Parsons, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982) and that b) these values, goals, and expectations appear to be associated with characteristic patterns of children's school accomplishment. For example, parental values and goals focused on the development of conformity and obedience in children (i.e., the shaping of children's behavior to meet acceptable standards or norms) are often associated with lower levels of achievement and psychosocial functioning in children; in contrast, parental values and goals focused on the importance of nurturing children's independent thinking, personal responsibility, and self-respect have been associated with higher levels of child achievement (e.g., Brody & Stoneman, 1992; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993; Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985).[1]

Goals such as these serve as motivators of human action (e.g., Bandura, 1989). As individuals define their goals (implicitly or explicitly), they represent those goals cognitively as future events; these cognized future events, according to Bandura (1989), become motivators and regulators of current behavior. This motivational link between goals and behavior is consistent with role theory's assertion that roles include both goals and values related to desired outcomes as well as behaviors characteristic of persons as they work within their understanding of their role(s) to accomplish those goals. Applied to parental involvement specifically, these ideas suggest that parents' goals for their children's development and education serve as motivators of parental actions intended to meet those goals. The goals parents choose, and the actions they choose to engage in as they work to meet those goals, are socially constructed; they are developed as a function of the interactions

between parents and the significant groups (both historical and contemporary) of which they are a part, and are manifested as parental roles.

Parents of school children, thus, hold values, goals, and expectations for themselves as parents, and they behave in ways motivated by and often consistent with these values and goals. Research on parents' involvement in child and adolescent schooling has suggested that parents often do behave in accordance with their beliefs about what they should do to help their children succeed in school. Parents have been observed behaving in a variety of ways with reference to their children's schooling--ranging from deference to the school in almost all matters to active participation in the child's learning, at home or in the school itself (e.g., Comer, 1980, 1988; Comer & Haynes, 1991; Epstein 1986, 1991; Lareau, 1989). Further, variations in parental behaviors have been linked to a several sources of values, goals, and beliefs about child-rearing, for example, social class (e.g., Lareau, 1989), national culture (e.g., Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990; Stevenson, Lee, Chen, Lummis, Stigler, Fan, & Ge, 1990), and what might be called the interaction of individual decision and circumstance (e.g.,Clark, 1983; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Scott-Jones, 1987; Segal, 1985). Thus, there appears to be general support in role theory, in developmental research, and in educational research for the observation that parents' values, goals, and expectations are often linked to their behaviors related to their children's education.

Given research findings on parental values and beliefs in relation to parental behaviors and child outcomes (e.g., Brody & Stoneman, 1992; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993; Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985), we assumed that parental values and goals might reasonably be categorized as beliefs related to the importance of the child's conforming to adult or institutional standards, and beliefs related to importance of the child's individuality and uniqueness. Similarly, given general findings of research on parental involvement in children's education (e.g., Comer & Haynes, 1991; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Epstein, 1986, 1991; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Lareau, 1989), we also assumed that parental behaviors (i.e., those grounded in parents' beliefs, values, and expectations) might reasonably be categorized in one of three major ways: a) behaviors reflecting a focus on the primary importance of the parent's responsibilities and activities in the child's education, b) behaviors reflecting a focus on the primary importance of the school's responsibilities and activities in the child's education, and c) behaviors reflecting a focus on the primary importance of a parent-school partnership's responsibilities and activities in children's education. Application of these ideas in a pilot study (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1995, described below) led us to suggest further that the behavioral component of role construction might best be construed as two relatively distinct sub-components: a) parental behaviors in the child's day-to-day education, and b) parental behaviors related to major decisions in the child's education. Figure 1 illustrates the full conceptualization of parental role construction as used in this study.

Hypotheses and expectations

Based on theoretical and empirical literature above, we formulated several sets of hypotheses about parental role in relation to children's education based on 'windows' or varied points of access to the construct. These hypotheses were framed in terms of expectations concerning relationships among the components of role construction (parental values, beliefs, goals, and expectations; parental ideas about responsibilities and activities in the child's day-to-day education; and parental ideas about responsibilities and activities concerning major decisions in the child's education), as well as expectations concerning relationships between parental role construction and selected indicators of parental and child functioning.

Parental role construction

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We first considered parental role construction itself, assessing the relationship between the two proposed 'responsibilities and behaviors' components (day-to-day and major-decision), and then the relationship between each of these components and the 'values and goals' component of role construction.

Relationship between day-to-day and major-decision components. In order to determine the viability of considering day-to-day and major-decision role behaviors as relatively distinct components of parental role construction, we first examined the relationship between the two areas. We believed prior to the pilot study that the two areas might be theoretically distinct (e.g., day-to-day behaviors call forth normal, regular responses often characterized by automaticity, while major-decision behaviors usually follow problems or issues explicitly observed by parents or teachers and are subject to explicit thinking and planning about new information and 'territory'). Pilot study results (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1995) supported this belief.

Values and goals' component as related to day-to-day and major-decision components. Because conformity-centered values tend to emphasize children's obedience and behavior, the passive nature of learning, and the importance of family privacy, we reasoned that they would motivate parents to engage directly with their children to reinforce the qualities they believe enable satisfactory school performance (parent-focused day-to-day responsibilities and behaviors). We believed these values would also motivate parents rely on the school as being similarly, but separately, reinforcing of the child's obedience, 'good' behavior, and appropriate learning (school-focused day-to-day responsibilities and behaviors). Thus, we expected significant positive relationships between child-conformity values and both parent-focused and school-focused day-to-day behaviors.

We expected child-uniqueness values to be associated with parent-focused and partnership-focused day-to-day behaviors. Parents who value the child's uniqueness seem motivated for direct work with the child (parent-focused day-to-day responsibilities and behaviors), in order to observe and nurture the child's personality, strengths, and talents; similarly, they seem motivated for direct engagement with the teacher (partnership-focused day-to-day responsibilities and behaviors) as they work to explain, advocate, and ensure educational practices specifically appropriate for *this* child.

We did not have firm expectations for links between values and major-decision responsibilities and activities, given the early state of our understanding of the latter role construction component. It seemed possible, however, that parents might often have a more intense 'stake' in the child's well-being in major-decision (as compared to day-to-day) situations, because major decisions make salient the child's long-term prospects for success. This, in turn, suggested that parents would be more inclined to focus on the child him/herself in major situations, increasing the likelihood of both child-uniqueness values and goals and parent-focused major decision responsibilities and behaviors.

Parental role construction and other parent and child variables

Parental efficacy for helping children succeed in school. Personal sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school refers to parents' beliefs that they can, through their personal actions, exert positive influence over their children's educational outcomes. Like parental role construction, personal sense of efficacy has been identified as an important contributor to parents' involvement decisions (e.g., Bandura et al., 1996; Eccles & Harold, 1993, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; in press). The two constructs are also theoretically related. Role theory suggests that roles incorporate goals for outcomes valued by groups and their individual members (e.g., Forsyth, 1991; Wheelan, 1994). As applied to parental involvement, efficacy theory (e.g., Bandura, 1989) suggests that individuals whose role construction is defined as including strong parental or partnership responsibilities for children's educational outcomes (i.e., role construction including a stronger cognized set of goals for direct parental activity in support of children's educational progress) should

also hold a strong sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school.

Because parents with a stronger sense of efficacy should be more confident in their personal abilities to help children learn (and this confidence, in turn, should motivate them toward direct engagement with the child and more interaction with the child's teacher) we expected positive relationships between parent efficacy and parent-focused as well as partnership-focused day-to-day responsibilities and behaviors. At the same time, we expected a negative relationship between efficacy and school-focused day-to-day responsibilities and behaviors because parents with a strong sense of personal efficacy for helping children succeed in school should be motivated to *avoid* relying heavily on 'someone else' for the child's day-to-day educational success.

We expected similar links between parental efficacy and major-decision responsibilities and behaviors. In fact, we expected that relationships here might be even stronger than those for the day-to-day component, because major decisions seem likely to elicit a stronger sense of threat as well as an increased need for access to personal ability and resources--both of which should prove strong motivators of action among parents with a strong sense of efficacy.

Teacher-rated parental effectiveness. As a check on the parental efficacy measure, and as a means of ascertaining if teachers' ideas about parents' effectiveness in helping their children learn are linked systematically to parents' role construction. Reasoning that teachers should value varied parental actions that support children's school progress (e.g., Epstein, 1986), we anticipated positive relationships between teacher ratings of parental effectiveness and all categories of parents' day-to-day responsibilities and behaviors; we expected in particular that teachers might respond positively to relatively high incidence of parental school-focused behavior, in both the day-to-day and major-decision components. We also expected that teacher ratings of parent effectiveness might be more strongly related to child-conformity values, reasoning that teachers might well consider parents' valuing of children's conformity with standards more conducive to school success than parental valuing of child uniqueness.

Child achievement. Given consistent evidence in the literature that parental involvement contributes to children's school performance (e.g., Bandura et al., 1996; Epstein, 1989, 1994; Reynolds, Mavrogenes, Bezruczko, & Hagemann, 1996; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992; U.S. Department of Education, 1994), we also sought to identify links between role construction and child achievement. We expected positive relationships between child achievement and parent-focused as well as partnership-focused day-to-day responsibilities and behaviors. This expectation was grounded in evidence (such as that above) suggesting that children whose parents work directly with them, and engage with the teacher on a consistent basis, do better in school than do their counterparts with uninvolved parents.

Parental role construction patterns

Having considered links among components and relationships between the construct and a small sample of theoretically related parent and child variables, we examined role construction data for consistent patterns linking varied combinations of role construction components. We considered emergent patterns with particular reference to variations in child achievement, as well as indicators of parental functioning and demographic status.

Method

Subjects

The participants were 74 parents of public elementary school children in grades two through five. The children attended one of two elementary schools in a large metropolitan school district. The two schools were located in different parts of the district; each served a socioeconomically

diverse population. Parents were recruited for participation from six classrooms across the two schools; these classrooms were identified by the school principal as those of teachers in grades two through five who were 'average' in parent involvement practices (i.e., neither strongly encouraging nor strongly discouraging of parental involvement). All teachers so identified agreed to have their classrooms participate in the study. The study was conducted toward the end of the school year, when parents and teachers both had a relatively full experience of the grade, its requirements, parental involvement, and teacher practices. The schools were supportive of the study, but also asked that it intrude minimally in normal end-of-the year school routines. Parental participation in the study was solicited through letters to parents sent home by students; one follow-up letter was sent to parents who had not responded within a two-week period. Parents who elected to participate represented approximately 50% of the children in each classroom.

The 'average' participating parent was a white, married mother of three children who was employed out of the home in a sales, clerical, or technical job (see Table 1 for full list of participant characteristics). In order to check for differences between participating and non-participating parents,

Insert Table 1 about here

we compared the two groups on both teacher-rated parental effectiveness and child achievement. Findings for child achievement indicated no significant differences between participating and non-participating parents; however, parent effectiveness ratings did reflect a significant difference in favor of participants ($x = 2.93$ [sd = 1.09] vs. non-participating parents $x = 2.60$ [sd = 0.82]; $t = 2.19$, $p < .05$). The results, thus, must be considered within the possibility that the sample included who were perceived by teachers as more effective with their children.

Procedures

Parents who agreed to participate in the study were contacted by phone; the study was explained again, questions were answered, and an appointment for the interview was made. All measures were administered, by one of three trained interviewers, to individual parents in an unused classroom or conference room at the schools. At the beginning of each interview period, parents were asked to complete the parent efficacy scale. When the parent had completed the scale, continued efforts were made to put the parent at ease. Permission to audiotape the interview was confirmed, and the informal (as well as confidential) nature of the interview was stressed. Almost all parents appeared to be at ease by the time the interview process began, and almost all appeared comfortable in discussing their responses candidly with the interviewer. Individual interviews generally lasted about 45 minutes; at the end of the interview, the parent was given a token payment of $15.00 in thanks for her or his participation.

Teachers of the classrooms from which the parents were drawn were asked shortly before the end of the year to complete teacher ratings of parental effectiveness and (separately) their ratings of each child's general level of achievement for the year. Teachers were also paid a token $15.00 in thanks for their time.

Measures

Parental role construction. Data on parental role construction were derived from interviews with parents regarding their interactions with their child, their child's teacher, and their child's school as related to the child's education and educational progress. The parent interview consistent of 11 major open-ended questions, each with follow-up probes, focused on several areas of normal parent-child-school interactions (e.g., activities and feelings of effectiveness in helping the child with homework, projects, and other school activities; experiences in parent-teacher conferences and in the school itself; areas of perceived influence in children's education; problems or conflicts experienced

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and steps taken toward solving them, as well as responses to hypothetical conflict situations; ideas about parents' and teachers' responsibilities in children's education; beliefs about the 'difference' parent involvement can make). Interviews were audiotaped and subsequently transcribed verbatim for coding.

Development of the parental role construction coding scheme began with the examination of literature pertinent to parents' ideas about their activities related to children's education for specific indicators of role construction. Working from these indicators (listed in Appendix A), we reviewed a small preliminary group of parental reports of activities related to their children's schooling. We worked reiteratively with the literature base, the list of role construction indicators, and the preliminary interviews to develop a protocol for analyzing a pilot sample of parent interviews for evidence of role construction. We focused on deriving a protocol for examining interview data that seemed to access the fullest possible range of information pertinent to role construction.

We then subjected a pilot sample of interviews with mothers of elementary school children to the coding protocol (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1995). This process involved 'bracketing' each statement or phrase in each interview transcript that appeared related to any of the identified role construction issues; in general, brackets were placed around the smallest sensible or 'code-able' idea consistent with this guideline. Independent bracketing of each interview was compared; disagreements were discussed and resolved by consensus. Each bracketed interview was then coded independently by two raters trained to use the role coding protocol. Initial inter-rater agreement on coding of all statements within each interview ranged from .70 to .94 ($x = .81$, $sd = .06$) across the full set of 20 interviews. Disagreements on the coding of individual statements were resolved by discussion and consensus, such that the final coding of each interview represented full agreement between the two raters. Analysis of these pilot data and subsequent consideration of data emerging from the analyses led to final modifications to the coding scheme.

In its final form, the role construction coding scheme consisted of the three components summarized in Figure 1, and described fully in Appendix B. The first component, parent's

Insert Figure 1 about here

developmental values, beliefs, goals, and expectations consisted of two categories (numbered categories 1 and 2): 1) *child-conformity*: parent believes the child is a passive recipient of knowledge, teaching, and information from adults, and 2) *child-uniqueness*: parent believes the child's uniqueness and individuality should be nurtured and developed. The second component, parent's beliefs about responsibility for the child's day-to-day education as reflected in parent actions included three categories (numbered 3, 4, and 5): 3) *parent-focused*: parent reports ideas and actions reflecting parental beliefs that the child's day-to-day education is primarily the parent's responsibility; 4) *school-focused*: parent reports ideas and actions reflecting parental beliefs that child's day-to-day education is primarily the school's responsibility; 5) *partnership-focused*: parent reports ideas and actions reflecting parental beliefs that child's day-to-day education is best served by a parent-school partnership. The third component, parent beliefs about responsibility for major decisions in the child's education as reflected in parent actions, consisted of three categories (numbered 6, 7, and 8): 6) *parent-focused*: parent reports ideas and actions, real or hypothetical, reflecting parental beliefs that major decisions concerning the child's education are primarily the parent's responsibility; 7) *school-focused*: parent reports ideas and actions, real or hypothetical, reflecting parental beliefs that major decisions concerning the child's education are primarily the school's responsibility; and 8) *partnership-focused*: parent reports ideas and actions, real or hypothetical, reflecting parental beliefs that major decisions concerning the child's education are primarily the responsibility of a parent-school partnership. Each

of the eight categories contained specific sub-categories of information (see Appendix B); for purposes of the analyses presented here, however, all data were aggregated to the category level. In all, the interview transcripts from the 74 participating parents yielded 9,837 coded statements, with an average of 132.93 statements per interview (sd = 54.56).

Individual statements in interview transcripts were coded independently by three trained coders, working in pairs for each interview. Initial agreement between coders on all statements in each interview ranged from .72 to .93, with an average of .83 (sd = .05) across the full set of interviews. Each statement not agreed upon initially by the two coders was discussed fully and coded by consensus. All statements included in the analyses thus represent full agreement by the two coders for each interview.

Parent efficacy for helping children succeed in school. The Parent Efficacy Scale (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992), grounded in efficacy theory (e.g., Bandura, 1986, 1989) and prior work with teacher efficacy (e.g., Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983; Dembo & Gibson, 1985; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987) consisted of 12 items focused on parents' self-assessed abilities to influence the child's educational outcomes, beliefs about their effectiveness in influencing the child's school learning, and beliefs about their own influence in this process relative to that of the child's teacher and the child's peers. The scale includes such items as "I know how to help my child do well in school," "If I try hard, I can get through to my child even when he/she has trouble understanding something," and "Other children have more influence on my child's motivation to do well in school than I do" (reverse coded). Each item was scored on a five-point scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) earlier reported an alpha reliability of .81 with a sample of 390 parents; reliability for this sample was also .81.

Parental demographic information. At the conclusion of the individual interview, parents were asked for information regarding employment status, occupation, marital status, and number of siblings in the family. Information on occupation was scored using Hollingshead's categories of occupational status (Myers & Bean, 1968).

Parent effectiveness as rated by child's teachers. Teachers were asked to rate the general effectiveness of each child's parents, following a procedure reported by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992). Teachers, blind to the participation decisions of individual parents, responded to this request for all students in their classrooms. The teacher was given a list of all children enrolled in her classroom, and was asked her to rate each child's parents on a scale of 1 (very ineffective) to 4 (very effective) with respect to her assessment of the parent's general effectiveness in helping the child learn.

Child achievement. Teachers were asked to rate each child's general level of achievement for the year (again following a procedure reported by Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). Teachers (again blind to the participation decisions of individual parents) responded to this request for all students in their classrooms, using a 13-point scale, reflecting an A+ (13) to F (0) grade distribution.

Results

Relationships among role construction components

Relationships between day-to-day and major-decision components. As hypothesized, the day-to-day (categories 3, 4, 5) and major-decision (categories 6, 7, 8) components of parental role construction recorded only minimal links (see Table 2). Of the nine possible bivariate relationships,

Insert Table 2 about here

only two were significant, and one of those was negative. The general absence of significant

relationships between the two components supported the suggestion that parents' thinking and actions related to day-to-day and major-decision situations represent relatively distinct domains of parental role construction.

Linkages between the values component and the day-to-day and major-decision components. Expectations for linkages between the values and day-to-day components of parental role construction were supported. As hypothesized, child-conformity values were related to parent-focused ($r = .51$, $p < .001$) and school-focused behaviors ($r = .60$, $p < .001$); child-conformity values were also linked to partnership-focused behaviors ($r = .33$, $p < .01$). Child-uniqueness values were related, as hypothesized, to parent-focused ($r = .48$, $p < .001$) and partnership-focused day-to-day behaviors ($r = .47$, $p < .001$).

Major-decision parent-focused ($r = .38$, $p < .001$) and partnership-focused ($r = .34$, $p < .01$) behaviors were positively associated with child-uniqueness values; no major-decision category, however, was linked to child-conformity values.

Parental role construction and other parent and child variables

In order to test hypotheses concerning relationships between role construction and other indicators of parental functioning and status, we transformed role construction data from simple frequencies of mention across the full eight categories of role construction to proportions of statements represented by each category within the component to which each category belonged (i.e., values: categories 1 and 2; day-to-day responsibilities and behaviors: categories 3, 4, and 5; major-decision responsibilities and behaviors, categories 6, 7, and 8). Having supported, theoretically and empirically, the relatively distinct nature of the three components of role construction, we wanted to answer our next questions based on the relative weighting of statements within each of the role construction components. Following this procedure allowed us to rely on the relative importance each parent attached to the separate categories composing each of the components, as assessed by the number of statements within a category as a proportion of total statements in the component; this procedure also allowed us to 'equate' for differences in absolute numbers of statements made by participating parents. The transformed data thus consisted of scores calculated on the basis of the percentage of total statements in each component accounted for by each category within the component (values and goals: category 1 + category 2; day-to-day behaviors: category 3 + category 4 + category 5; and major-decision behaviors: category 6 + category 7 + category 8).[2]

Parental efficacy for helping children succeed in school. Parental efficacy was positively related to teacher-rated parental effectiveness ($r = .44$, $p < .001$; see Table 3), suggesting support for

Insert Table 3 about here

the validity of the efficacy measure. Some discrepancies in patterns of correlation for the two constructs, however (e.g., for parent-focused and partnership-focused major-decision behaviors), suggested that the two may also access somewhat different sources.

Results for links between parental efficacy and the day-to-day component of role construction offered only partial affirmation of expected relationships; as predicted, parental efficacy was positively linked to parent-focused behaviors ($r = .23$, $p < .05$). Contrary to expectation, however, parental efficacy recorded a significant negative linkage with school-focused behaviors ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$) and no significant relationship with partnership-focused behaviors.

Findings for the major-decision component of role construction followed the same pattern. Parental efficacy was positively linked to parent-focused behaviors ($r = .28$, $p < .05$) but, again contrary to prediction, was negatively related to school-focused behaviors ($r = -.38$, $p < .001$) and was unrelated to partnership-focused behaviors.

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Parental efficacy was positively linked to child-uniqueness values ($r = .26$, $p < .05$) and negatively related to child-conformity values ($r = -.26$, $p < .05$).

Teacher-rated parental effectiveness. We expected positive relationships between teacher-rated parent effectiveness and all categories of the day-to-day component of role construction. Only one finding was consistent with this hypothesis, however: teacher-rated parental effectiveness was positively related to parent-focused behavior ($r = .33$, $p < .01$). Contrary to expectation, teacher-rated parental effectiveness was negatively related to school-focused day-to-day behaviors ($r = -.46$, p,.001) and unrelated to partnership-focused behaviors.

Results for the major-decision component of role construction revealed a somewhat different pattern of relationships: here, teacher-rated parental effectiveness was positively related to partnership-focused behaviors ($r = .24$, $p < .05$), unrelated to parent-focused behaviors, and negatively related to school-focused behaviors ($r = -.41$, $p < .001$).

Child achievement. Findings for child achievement and the day-to-day component of role construction offered only partial support for hypothesized relationships: a positive linkage with parent-focused behaviors ($r = .33$, $p < .01$). Contrary to expectation, child-achievement was not related to partnership-focused day-to-day behaviors, and was negatively related to school-focused behaviors ($r = -.38$, $p < .001$).

Results for the major-decision component of parental role construction also offered only partial support for expected relationships. Child achievement was positively related to partnership-focused behaviors ($r = .23$, $p < .05$), but, contrary to expectation, was unrelated to parent-focused behaviors. Child achievement was also negatively related to school-focused behaviors ($r = -.42$, $p < .001$).

Findings for child achievement generally paralleled those for teacher-rated parent effectiveness (not surprisingly, given the strong correlation between the two variables). The strong relationship between child achievement and both parental efficacy and teacher-rated parental effectiveness suggests that both may influence--and be influenced by--the child's achievement patterns for a given year.

Parent demographic characteristics. There were few significant links involving parents' status characteristics. Among role construction categories, only day-to-day partnership-focused behaviors were significantly linked to any status characteristic (total children [$r = -.29$, $p < .01$] and child grade [$r = -.24$, $p < .05$]). Parental efficacy was negatively related to child grade ($r = -.26$, $p < .05$), as was teacher-rated parental effectiveness ($r = -31$, $p < .01$), suggesting that parents with higher efficacy and higher teacher-rated parent effectiveness had children in the lower grades. Teacher-rated parental effectiveness and child achievement were negatively linked to marital status ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$, $r = -.35$, $p < .01$, respectively), indicating that both scores were lower for single parents.

Patterns of role construction

Having considered links among role construction components as well as relationships between parental role construction and the small sample of theoretically related parent and child variables, we examined parental role construction data for consistent patterns linking varied combinations of role construction components.

Cluster analysis yielded six discrete groups, which included 68 of the 74 participants (Table 4). In examining these data, we focused on the three clusters recording highest levels of child

Insert Table 4 about here

achievement (clusters 2, 4, and 5) and the two recording lowest levels of child achievement (clusters 1 and 6).

Clusters with higher child achievement. Scores for the values component of role construction indicated that two higher-achievement clusters were characterized by a high proportion of child-

conformity statements, while the third high-achievement cluster recorded approximately even proportions across the child-conformity and child-uniqueness categories (child-conformity proportions: cluster 2 = .48, cluster 4 = .76, cluster 5 = .80).

In the day-to-day component of parental role construction, all three clusters were characterized by very low proportions of statements in the school-focused category (cluster 2 = .09, cluster 4 = .11, cluster 5 = .16,), but diverged after that point: clusters 2 and 5 recorded somewhat more partnership-focused (x = .51 and .49, respectively) than parent-focused statements (x = .41 and .35, respectively), while cluster 4 recorded more parent-focused (x = .62) than partnership-focused statements (x = .25).

In the major-decision component, all three high-achievement clusters were again characterized by low proportions of statements in the school-focused category (cluster 2 = .12, cluster 4 = .23, cluster 5 = .05). Again, they also recorded a mixed pattern in the other major-decision categories: cluster 2 recorded somewhat more partnership-focused (x = .54) than parent-focused (x = .35) statements; cluster 4 recorded nearly equal proportions for the two categories (parent-focused = .37, partnership-focused = .40), and cluster 5 recorded somewhat more parent-focused (x = .55) than partnership-focused statements (x = .40).

The three high achievement clusters recorded two of the highest parental efficacy scores and all of the three highest teacher ratings of parental effectiveness. They included two of the highest parent occupation ratings, and both the highest and lowest average number-of-children scores.

Clusters with lowest child achievement. Findings for the values component of role construction indicated that both low-achievement clusters recorded the highest proportion of values statements in the child-conformity category (cluster 1 = .75, cluster 6 = .66).

In the day-to-day component of parental role construction, cluster 1 recorded an even distribution of proportions across the three categories (parent-focused = .37, school-focused x = .32, partnership-focused x = .31); this school-focused figure highest for any of the six clusters emerging in the analysis. Cluster 6 recorded low school-focused behaviors (x = .13), with moderately high parent-focused (x = .43) and partnership-focused (x = .45) behaviors; in this pattern, cluster 6 was not unlike the higher-achievement clusters.

In the major-decision component, however, both lower-achievement clusters were unlike the high-achievement clusters. Both clusters recorded low proportions of partnership-focused behaviors (x = .23 and .20, respectively), and then deviated from one another: cluster 1 recorded higher parent-focused (x = .49) than school-focused (x = .29) behaviors, while cluster 6 recorded very high school-focused (x = .51) and very low partnership-focused behaviors (x = .20).

The low-achievement clusters included the two lowest parental efficacy scores and the two lowest teacher-rated parental effectiveness scores. Parental occupation ratings were comparable to those for the high-achievement clusters, as were numbers of children. Compared to the higher-achieving clusters, the low-achieving clusters tended to include children slightly higher in grade (x = 4.35 and 4.00).

Discussion

Consistent with role theory and developmental research, the results supported an understanding of parental role as a relatively complex construction composed of values and goals linked to patterns of ideas about responsibilities and appropriate behaviors in children's education. Consistent with suggestions from pilot work on parental role construction, results also supported the assertion that parental role as related to children's education is appropriately conceptualized as containing two relatively distinct 'responsibility and behavior' components, one related to the child's day-to-day

education, the other to major decisions that emerge in the course of the child's schooling.

These findings constitute new and important contributions to understanding the full set of constructs that motivate parental involvement in children's education. Although included in several prior investigations of parental involvement (e.g., Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Clark, 1983; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Ritter, et al., 1993), to this point 'parental role' has been construed primarily in relatively simple and unidimensional terms (e.g., attitudes toward involvement, beliefs about parental vs. school responsibility in education). The results of this study support a richer and more theoretically grounded conceptualization of parental role construction. At the same time, they point to specific links between role construction and other parent (as well as child) constructs that are both theoretically and pragmatically important to the education and socialization of children.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995; in press) suggested that parental role construction is a significant contributor to parents' decisions about becoming involved in children's education because it establishes, at a personal level, the range of activities that parents are likely to construe as important, necessary, and permissible for their own actions with and on behalf of their children's education. Composed of values, goals and expectations, as well as characteristic patterns of thinking about the responsibilities and behaviors associated with parental engagement in children's schooling, role construction contributes to parents' decisions about involvement because it sets the general parameters of actions that parents believe they may and should engage in with reference to their children's schooling. Combined with parents' sense of efficacy for helping the child succeed in school (a personal assessment of how effective one might expect to be, if involved) and general invitations to involvement from the child and the school (important as external motivators of involvement), parental role construction is believed to exert significant influence over parents' basic decisions about active engagement in children's education. Study results suggested several ways in which parental role construction might be related to parents' involvement behaviors and, ultimately, to children's educational outcomes.

The values, goals, and expectations that parents hold for their children's development appeared as salient background against which their ideas about appropriate responsibilities and activities in their children's education were developed. As a group, these parents subscribed to both child-conformity and child-uniqueness values, but the majority of their attention--especially with reference to the child's day-to-day education--focused on child-conformity. Their goals, thinking, and reported actions tended to emphasize the child's meeting established standards for academic accomplishment and behavior. Their emphasis on this value suggests, especially with reference to day-to-day issues, that parents generally endorsed the standards inherent in formal education and construed their roles both as supporting those standards and behaving in ways they believed would help their children meet those standards. In many ways, these parents appeared to assume that the school is indeed appropriately responsible for the more 'universalistic' aspects of child socialization (Lightfoot, 1978), and they appeared to believe that their children's education should include learning to meet those general and culture-wide requirements of socialization. Thus, they appeared to focus a good deal of their routine, *education-related* thinking about the child on ways of supporting the child's conformity to school routines and school expectations for behavior and performance.

The finding that parents subscribed to *both* major kinds of values and goals (child-conformity and child-uniqueness suggests that many of these parents were motivated toward the dual goals of raising the child to meet socially accepted standards *and* to express individual strengths and characteristics (a pattern reminiscent of the pattern of goals often associated with authoritative parenting; e.g., Baumrind, 1973, 1989, 1991; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). While other findings have suggested relatively linear relationships between 'predominant' patterns of parental values or goals and

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outcomes (e.g., Brody & Stoneman, 1992; Lareau, 1989; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993; Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985), the findings here suggest that many parents hold both kinds of values and draw on both in varying degrees as they develop ideas and plans for both day-to-day and major-decision actions related to their children's education. The critical issue for parental involvement appears not to lie in the specific nature of the values component of role construction, but in the nature of parents' thinking and actions following their values and goals.

Findings for the empirically derived groupings of parental role construction suggested further that the nature of parents' thinking and action following values and goals (i.e., the specific configuration of role construction categories that receive priority within the day-to-day and major-decision components) is not arrayed in patterns ranging from more to less effective, but rather appears in varied 'mixes' of role construction sub-components that complement each another and 'work' (or fail to work) for the parent in a given school situation.

The groups associated with more positive child achievement emphasized *parent*-focused and *partnership*-focused behaviors across day-to-day and major-decision components. Some combination of these two sub-components of responsibilities and behaviors appeared critical to more positive outcomes. For example, one higher-achievement group was relatively strong in partnership-focused behaviors in both day-to-day and major-decision components; another was very strong in parent-focused behaviors in the day-to-day component, but recorded nearly even parent- and partnership-focused behaviors in the major-decision component; the third was strong in day-to-day partnership-focused behaviors, but shifted to strong parent-focused behaviors in the major-decision component. These patterns support the observation that *both* parent-focused and partnership-focused ideas are important in parental role construction, just as they suggest that the specific patterns of emphasis across the two sub-components is less important.

Notable by their very low proportions of occurrence in the higher-achieving groups were *school*-focused behaviors: parents of higher-achieving children did *not* emphasize school-focused behaviors. The consistency of this pattern (and its reverse: the lower-achieving groups recorded relatively high proportions of school-focused behaviors) underscores the importance of parental role construction defined by emphases on parents engaging with their children and their children's teachers, rather than leaving the child's education 'up to the school.'

The findings also offer support for the assertion that parental role construction and parental efficacy for helping children succeed in school--while different constructs contributing in different ways to parents' involvement decisions--are related. The positive link between parental sense of efficacy and the parent-focused day-to-day and major-decision components of role construction suggests both that a) parental efficacy motivates higher levels of parent-focused behavior within parental role construction, and b) emphases on parent-focused behaviors within role construction support the parent's sense of efficacy for helping the child succeed. For example, parents who believe strongly that they are *supposed* to play an active role in children's day-to-day education (i.e., have relatively strong parent-focused role construction related to children's education) are likely, in enacting the role, to enhance their sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in education. That is, believing that one is *supposed* to be involved and play an important role in children's education is likely to serve as a cognized goal motivating increased role behavior. Increased role behavior--especially if successful--is likely to serve as a reinforcer of efficacy (e.g., serving as a direct mastery source of efficacy). The results also suggest that without some minimal level of efficacy, parents may be unable to envision and engage in anything *other* than school-focused day-to-day and major-decision behaviors (i.e., they may not see themselves as sufficiently capable of constructing any role other than one heavily reliant on passive support of the school).

Suggestions for future research

The study, of course, was correlational, thus making specific causal statements problematic. For example, it may be as reasonable to assume that child achievement influences parental role construction as it is to assume that parental role construction influences child achievement. We believe, however--consistent with theory and empirical work affirming that the direction of causality usually flows from parental values and goals to parental behavior (e.g., Goodnow, 1988; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1992; Parsons et al., 1982), and from variations in parental behavior to variations in child achievement (e.g., Reynolds, et al., 1996; Steinberg, et al., 1989, 1992)--that parental role construction likely influences children's achievement. Employment of a short-term longitudinal design in future work on parental role construction would allow for explicit testing of this assumption.

Limitations of the study also flow from characteristics of the sample, and these should be addressed in future research. While yielding a large set of interview-derived parental ideas and reported behaviors, the sample was relatively small. Further, while not unlike many public school populations in general demographic characteristics (e.g., parental employment, marital status, and number of children), the proportion of ethnic minority parents in the sample (13%) was quite small, and participating parents as a group were rated by teachers as somewhat higher in effectiveness than were non-participating parents. On both counts, the study's findings should be replicated with a larger, more ethnically diverse parent sample representing a larger proportion of the school-parent population.

Similarly, our measure of child achievement was general (although not inconsistent with other single-source estimates of student achievement used in the field; e.g., Dornbusch, Ritter, Liederman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987). The use of multiple indicators of child achievement in future studies--and the addition of measures of child adjustment or school-related behaviors--would strengthen knowledge of a broader range of child outcomes potentially related (directly and indirectly) to parental role construction.

Our results suggested that parental role construction--at least within this sample, as assessed by the measures used here--is *not* significantly associated with parental status. Future examination of parents' role construction would benefit from inclusion of a full range of parental status indicators, especially given evidence from other studies that aspects of parental status *are* implicated in parents' views of their roles in children's education (e.g., Lareau, 1989).

Overall, the purpose of this study was to learn more about parents' role construction as related to their children's education. The results offer new and richer information about the construct than has been available in the parent involvement literature to this time. The information is important also, however, because it brings us closer to understanding important contributors to parents' involvement decisions and their specific functions in guiding those decisions. The results and the full model from which the study was drawn both suggest that followup research on parental role construction--its (direct) influence on parental involvement decision, as well as its (indirect) influence on child outcomes--should be undertaken. This research should be designed with additional consideration of the specific mechanisms through which parental involvement leads to more positive child outcomes, as well as a richer set of child outcome measures (e.g., indicators of academic [teacher ratings, grades, standardized test scores] and psychosocial [e.g., child's sense of efficacy, behavior] outcomes).

The parent's perspective on the involvement process, of course, is only one among several important perspectives. Also important to parental role construction and the parental involvement process are the contributions offered by other elements of the child's school ecology--the child's teacher(s), the school, the child herself or himself, the extended family and others important to the

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child's schooling. These perspectives should be incorporated in future research especially as focused on evolution, development, and influence of parental role construction.

Suggestions for parent and school practice

The findings of the study also offer suggestions for practice, for both parents and schools. For parents, the findings underscore the importance of an active and engaged parental role in relation to children's education. The values that parents bring to their roles serve as important motivators of parental responsibilities and actions; whatever the mix of parental values, goals, and expectations, however, the findings suggest that parents should allow these values to function as motivators of behaviors conducive to the child's education and socialization. Given their values, parents should develop clear ideas about what they want for the child, and what they want from the educational process for this child. Guided by their values, parents should engage in the educational process in support of their goals for their children. The fact that parental role construction is essentially social in nature (i.e., others who are important to the parent--historically and contemporarily--also contribute to the role that parents develop for themselves) also suggests that parents should actively access these 'others.' In particular, they should access the educational expertise and insights of their children's teachers as they create and act within the framework of their own role construction. Parental nurturing of their own sense of parental efficacy--through observing friends, talking to 'experts,' taking courses, reading, interacting with widely available information about children's development and education--should be an important part of this process.

For schools, the findings suggest strongly that parental role construction focused on *parental* as well as *partnership* responsibilities and behaviors is associated with higher teacher-rated parental effectiveness and stronger child achievement (parental role construction incorporating relatively strong focus on the *school's* responsibilities and actions was associated with much lower teacher ratings of parental effectiveness and lower child achievement). While intuition may sometimes suggest that teachers should value parents who passively accept and support school decisions related to the child's education, the results indicate that teachers are much more positive about parents who are *actively* engaged with their children and who actively engage the parent-teacher partnership. For parents whose role construction already includes parent- and partnership-focused ideas and abilities, schools' roles may be appropriately centered on appreciating and interacting with the parental involvement that follows. However, for parents whose role construction is focused on passive support of whatever the school does (or for parents whose role ideas are still 'under construction'), the findings suggest that teachers, parents, and children are likely to benefit from active school efforts to encourage, nurture and support the parent- and partnership-focused elements of parental role construction.

Overall, the results of the study suggest that the educational process is more effective when the parent's contribution is *active* within the home and with the teacher. That teachers rate as more effective parents who are more active in the educational process suggests that many teachers may be more receptive to active parental involvement than many parents currently believe. Both of these players--critical to the education of children and adolescents--must be enabled to pass easily through the school doors in support of the most effective education possible for the children involved.

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Notes

1. A related body of research focused on parenting style, parenting behaviors, and child outcomes (e.g., Baumrind, 1973, 1989, 1991; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg, Elman, & Mounts, 1989; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991) also supports this pattern of findings. For example, authoritative parenting and its associated behaviors--reflecting high parental nurturance and high parental control of the child--has been associated consistently with stronger achievement and more positive psychosocial outcomes among children and adolescents, when compared to alternative parenting styles.

However, while sharing similarities in their foundation in both values and patterns of behavior, parental role construction differs from parenting style. Parenting style has been defined as the emotional climate within which parents' child socialization practices take place (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Parental role construction, in contrast, incorporates parents' ideas about what parents are supposed to do--as members of the broadly construed group, 'parents of children in school'--in relation to the child's schooling and educational progress. Role construction includes parents' goals for child-rearing, perceptions of behaviors expected to be enacted by person holding the role of parent, and actual behavior, undertaken in the context of those expectations, with and on behalf of their children.

Thus, while parenting style references a reasonably consistent characteristic of the parent as he or she engages with the child throughout the day and presumably across the years, parental role construction references parents' socially derived goals, expectations, and requirements for personal behavior as the parent of a child in school. This role encompasses goals and behaviors with the child and--on behalf of the child--with individuals and institutions who also have socially sanctioned influence on the child's socialization and development.

2. For example, Parent A's "total statement" scores for the three categories within the day-to-day major component of role construction would be transformed as follows:

	total statements	score based on total statements in the category as a proportion of total statements in the full major component of role construction
Category 3	35	58 (%)
Category 4	10	17 (%)
Category 5	15	25 (%)
Total	60	100 (%)

Figure 1: Parental role construction composed of three components

Parent Role Construction Concerning Child Education

Components and Categories

Values Component

1) *Child-Conformity:* parent believes that the child is a passive recipient of knowledge, and should conform to academic and behavioral standards

2) *Child-Uniqueness:* parent believes the child's uniqueness, self esteem, and understanding are to be nurtred and developed

Day-to-Day Component

3) *Parent-Focused:* parent reports behaviors reflecting belief that the child's day-to-day education is primarily the parent's responsibility

4) *School-Focused:* parent reports behaviors reflecting the belief that the child's day-to-day education is primarily the school's responsibility

5) *Partnership-Focused:* parent reports behaviors that reflect the belief that the child's day-to-day education is primarily the responsibility of the parent and the school together in partnership

Major-Decisions Component

6) *Parent-Focused:* parent reports behaviors reflecting the belief that major decisions concerning the child's education are primarily the responsibility of the parent.

7) *School-Focused:* parent reports behaviors reflecting the belief that major decisions concerning the child's education are primarily the responsibility of the school

8) *Partnership-Focused:* parent reports behaviors reflecting the belief that major decisions concerning the child's education are primarily the responsibility of the parent and school together in partnership.

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Characteristic	Number	Percentage of sample (total N = 74)
Gender		
Female	67	90.5%
Male	7	9.5%
Ethnicity		
Black	10	13.5%
White	59	79.7%
Unknown	5	6.8%
Marital status		
Married	48	64.9%
Not married (includes single, separated, divorced, widowed)	24	32.4%
No information	2	2.7%
Parent occupation, per Hollingshead (Myers & Bean, 1968)		
1. Executive, "major professions"	--	--
2. Managers, "minor professions"	1	1.4%
3. Administrators, small business owners, "semi-professionals"	6	8.1%
4. Clerical, sales, technicians; students	30	40.5%
5. Skilled workers	14	18.9%
6. Semiskilled workers	8	10.8%
7. Unskilled workers	4	5.4%
8. No information; not employed out of the home	11	14.9%
Number of children in family		
One	10	13.5%
Two	25	33.8%
Three	22	29.7%
Four	11	14.9%
Five or more	5	6.9%
No information	1	1.4%
Child grade		
2nd	13	17.6%
3rd	9	12.2%
4th	29	39.2%
5th	23	31.1%

Table 2: Correlations, means, and standard deviations: role construction categories, by total statements recorded in each category

	Parent role, Category 1	Parent role, Category 2	Parent role, Category 3	Parent role, Category 4	Parent role, Category 5	Parent role, Category 6	Parent role, Category 7	Parent role, Category 8
Parent role, Category 1	--							
Parent role, Category 2	.29**	--						
Parent role, Category 3	.51***	.48***	--					
Parent role, Category 4	.60***	.06	.19	--				
Parent role, Category 5	.33**	.47***	.39***	.34**	--			
Parent role, Category 6	.07	.38***	.01	.04	.11	--		
Parent role, Category 7	-.05	-.07	-.27*	.02	-.21	.39***	--	
Parent role, Category 8	.20	.34**	.14	.10	.29**	.68***	.32**	--
Range	2-70	0-48	6-66	0-40	1-74	0-78	0-35	1-34
Mean	28.78	15.57	26.31	9.62	21.78	15.16	6.89	8.81
Std. dev.	14.69	10.74	12.86	7.48	15.42	14.74	7.62	6.63

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

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Table 3: Correlations, means, and standard deviations, all variables; parent role category scores coded as percentage of total statements within role construction component#

	Parent role, category 1@	Parent role, category 2@	Parent role, category 3	Parent role, category 4	Parent role, category 5	Parent role, category 6	Parent role, category 7	Parent role, category 8	Parent efficacy	Teacher-rated parent effectiveness
Parent efficacy	-.26*	.26*	.23*	-.29**	-.04	.28*	-.38***	.09	—	
Teacher rated parent effectiveness	-.26*	.26*	.33**	-.46***	-.04	.16	-.41***	.23*	.44***	—
Child achievement	-.20	.20	.33**	-.38***	-.09	.17	-.42***	.23*	.52***	.82***
Parent occupational status	.07	-.07	-.01	-.05	.02	-.05	-.05	.10	.17	.10
Parent marital status	.17	-.17	-.12	.18	.01	-.02	.03	-.02	-.15	-.31**
Parent number of children	.04	-.04	.20	.11	-.29**	.03	.18	-.20	.14	.07
Child grade	.17	-.17	.10	.20	-.24*	.07	.09	-.16	-.26*	-.29**
Range	.11-1.00	.00-.89	.24-.88	.00-.42	.03-.64	.00-.80	.00-.64	.09-1.00	33-60	1.00-4.00
Mean	.65	.35	.47	.17	.36	.46	.20	.34	46.31	2.93
Std dev.	.17	.17	.16	.10	.15	.17	.16	.16	5.73	1.09

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Scores represent the proportion of total parent statements within each component of role construction; the first component, parental values and goals, is composed of categories 1 and 2; the second component, parental responsibilities and behavior in child's day-to-day education, is composed of categories 3, 4, and 5; the third component, parental responsibilities and behavior in major educational decisions or conflicts, is composed of categories 6, 7, and 8

@ Correlations for these two categories are identical in number (with reversed signs) because each of the two category scores was calculated as a proportion of the total for the two categories.

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Table 3: Correlations, means, and standard deviations, all variables; parent role category scores coded as percentage of total statements within role construction component# (continued)

	Child achvmnt	Parent occupa-status	Parent marital of children	Parent number	Child grade
Child achvment	--				
Parent occup-ational status	.15	--			
Parent marital status	-.35**	-.16	--		
Parent number of children	.03	.03	-.26*	--	
Child grade	-.14	-.14	-.02	-.07	.07
Range	0-11	1.00-6.00	1.00-2.00	1-8	2.00-5.00
Mean	6.61	3.46	1.33	2.78	3.84
Std dev.	3.50	1.09	0.47	2.41	1.06

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Scores represent the proportion of total parent statements within each component of role construction; the first component, parental values and goals, is composed of categories 1 and 2; the second component, parental responsibilities and behavior in child's day-to-day education, is composed of categories 3, 4, and 5; the third component, parental responsibilities and behavior in major educational decisions or conflicts, is composed of categories 6, 7, and 8

@ Correlations for these two categories are identical in number (with reversed signs) because each of the two category scores was calculated as a proportion of the total for the two categories.

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Table 4: Role construction clusters, group means and standard deviations, by role construction categories, parent variables, and child variables

	Cluster 1 (n=18)		Cluster 2 (n=8)		Cluster 3 (n=13)	
	x	sd	x	sd	x	sd
Role construction						
Values component*						
1) *Child conformity*	.75	.08	.48	.08	.53	.06
2) *Child uniqueness*	.26	.08	.52	.08	.46	.06
Day-to-day component*						
3) *Parent-focused*	.37	.09	.41	.09	.47	.10
4) *School-focused*	.31	.07	.09	.06	.12	.04
5) *Partnership-focused*	.32	.12	.51	.05	.40	.10
Major-decision component*						
6) *Parent-focused*	.49	.10	.35	.09	.63	.07
7) *School-focused*	.29	.11	.12	.13	.10	.07
8) *Partnership-focused*	.23	.07	.54	.11	.28	.09
Parent efficacy	43.72	6.11	48.13	5.22	47.61	3.93
Teacher-rated parent effectiveness	2.19	1.35	3.44	.50	3.23	.93
Child achievement	4.28	3.55	7.50	2.67	7.15	3.34
Status variables						
Parent occupation	3.12	1.09	3.25	.89	3.20	1.40
Parent marital status	1.50	.52	1.38	.52	1.30	.48
Parent number of children	2.88	1.36	2.25	1.17	2.60	.84
Child grade	4.35	.87	3.00	1.20	3.90	1.20

* Figures represent the proportion of total statements for the component represented by the specific category within the component.

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Table 4: Role construction clusters, group means and standard deviations, by role construction categories, parent variables, and child variables (continued)

	Cluster 4 (n=15)		Cluster 5 (n=9)		Cluster 6 (n=5)	
	x	sd	x	sd	x	sd
Role construction						
Values component*						
1) *Child conformity*	.76	.07	.80	.13	.66	.09
2) *Child uniqueness*	.24	.07	.20	.13	.34	.09
Day-to-day component*						
3) *Parent-focused*	.62	.11	.35	.06	.43	.11
4) *School-focused*	.11	.04	.16	.04	.13	.08
5) *Partnership-focused*	.25	.11	.49	.06	.45	.08
Major-decision component*						
6) *Parent-focused*	.37	.13	.55	.12	.28	.08
7) *School-focused*	.23	.12	.05	.06	.51	.07
8) *Partnership-focused*	.40	.11	.40	.11	.20	.04
Parent efficacy	47.47	3.64	45.78	6.36	41.00	5.83
Teacher-rated parent effectiveness	3.33	.82	3.22	.97	2.00	.70
Child achievement	8.00	3.23	7.56	2.60	3.40	3.13
Status variables						
Parent occupation	3.80	1.14	3.71	1.11	3.60	1.14
Parent marital status	1.20	.42	1.43	.54	1.00	.00
Parent number of children	3.60	1.51	2.14	.69	3.20	2.95
Child grade	4.00	.67	4.00	1.00	4.00	1.22

* Figures represent the proportion of total statements for the component represented by the specific category within the component.

Appendix A: Indicators of parental role construction with reference to involvement in children's education

1. What do people expect of me in my role as my child's parent?* What does my family expect? What does the school expect? What do others--or other groups that are important to me--expect?
    a. Do these groups communicate their expectations for my behavior as my child's parent? How do they communicate these expectations?
    b. Are these groups' expectations for my behavior as my child's parent consistent across groups? Do varied expectations conflict?
2. What do *I expect of myself* in my role as my child's parent? What do I *do* in my role as my child's parent? What (else) would I *like* to do in my role as my child's parent?
3. Do my behaviors as my child's parent fit others' expectations for my behaviors as his/her parent? Do they conflict with others' expectations? Do they fit or conflict with my own expectations? Is there a 'match' among a) what others' expect of me, b) what I expect of myself, and c) what I do in my role as my child's parent?
4. If there is conflict among various expectations and my behaviors as my child's parent:
    a. Is role ambiguity present? Do I have clarity about the expectations and behaviors associated with my parental role?
    b. Is role conflict present? Do the demands of other roles in my life conflict with what I perceive to be the demands of my role as my child's parent? Are there conflicts between my own expectations for my role as my child's parent and the expectations of others for my role?
5. When and as problems arise in relation to my child's education, are they solved:
    a. To my satisfaction? In ways consistent with my expectations for my parental role?
    b. To my child's benefit?
    c. To the teacher's or school's satisfaction?
6. If problems are not solved, is the failure due to a 'poor match' of expectations or behaviors between myself and the groups of which I am a part? To difficult situational circumstances or child characteristics?
7. What are my beliefs and assumptions about the developmental outcomes that I want for my child? What qualities do I want to nurture or instill in my child? What values and learning outcomes do I want for my child?
8. What child-rearing behaviors do I expect of myself? What child-rearing behaviors do I think my child needs? What educational practices do I want for my child?
9. What are my beliefs and assumptions about my 'home support' roles in my child's education? Do I act in ways that involve supervising, monitoring, teaching my child at home or school? Do I intend to act--and do I act--in ways that actively support the teacher? The school? Do I expect the school to be responsible for my child's learning? What do I believe is the most appropriate 'mix' of my own responsibilities and the school's responsibilities for my child's learning?

* All statements related to "my role as my child's parent" refer to the parent's beliefs about his or her role in relation to the child's school, learning, success, and progress.

Appendix B: Role construction coding scheme

Parental role construction component: Parent's child-rearing values, goals, expectations.

Category 1: *Parent believes child is passive recipient of knowledge, teaching, and information from adults.*

1a. Parent focuses on child 'fitting' academic norms, e.g., acceptable grades, acceptable achievement, working hard, learn the basics, pay attention; parent pushes child to learn, values conformity in relation to learning, homework; parent focuses on child's personal responsibility for academic work; includes rewards given to promote child fitting academic norms; includes descriptive comments about child in relation to academic norms.

Examples: I'd make her sit down and do her work as soon as she got home.
I place a lot of emphasis on grades.
I say, "Get that diploma, because you'll never make it without it."

1b. Parent focuses on child 'fitting' behavioral norms, e.g., respect for teacher, obey parent, behave well, conform to behavioral expectations; descriptive comments related to child respecting, obeying, staying our of trouble; includes rewards given to promote child fitting behavioral norms; includes descriptive comments about child in relation to behavioral norms.

Examples: Once we got him into his normal class, we realized that he was going to have to relearn what is proper behavior.
Ms. X has him under control, and I like that.
He cannot be interrupting other kids.

Category 2: *Parent believes child's uniqueness and individuality are to be nurtured and developed.*

2a. Parent focuses on child's self-esteem, confidence, interest, pride in work, enjoyment, potential; comprehensive understanding (i.e., general understanding beyond understanding one problem, a direction, one assignment); includes parental encouragement, parent not wanting undue pressure on child, parent telling child to 'do the best you can; parental response to the child's immaturity, maturity, or maturing may be noted.

Examples: I think helping them to recognize their talents and levels . . . is also real important.
I have some smart children . . . and eager to learn.
We have explained stuff since then, what to expect and what's going on.

2b. Parent focuses on his/her opinion that the child's unique and special learning needs should be attended to and met by the parent, teacher, school (e.g., 'build a program,' create a response appropriate for the child); parent is focused on the need for appropriate parent, teacher, school responses to the child's unique qualities and interests, needs that are part of the child's personality and individual learning style.

Examples: She wants to read it to herself and by herself. And that will make her catch it.

I don't want to keep him fully involved in school [during the summer] because I know he gets burnt out real easy.
They gave A a reading workbook. Well, . . . A finished the entire workbook and [then] got in trouble for not following directions. To me, this would be a sign that the child had too much time on her hands, and to do something else for her.

2c. Parent seeks child opinion (usually, about a matter related to the child as information for the parent's own thinking about the child or situation); may include statements strongly suggesting that parent is really listening to the child's ideas or account of events.

Examples: T will tell you, if you just sit down with her, why she did it, or why she don't want to do it.
First, I get my son's opinion.
I would ask my child first.

Parental role construction component: Parent's reported actions and behaviors in child's day-to-day education.

Category 3: *Parent reports actions and behavior reflecting parental belief that the child's day-to-day education is the parent's responsibility.*

3a. Parent teaches, works with, explains, helps the child understand school assignments; includes parent's inquiries about current homework assignments (to be done), parent help in getting the work done.

Examples: I quiz her on whatever it is that she is supposed to be knowing.
We have a spelling test on like five words every night.
I try to show him how to use the dictionary to break down his words to help him a little bit more.

3b. Parent actively monitors child's overall progress, specific problems or strengths, at home or at school; includes observing child, wishing to observe child at school, checking on or reviewing completed work, keeping 'an eye on' school work or progress.

Examples: I try to stay up with what's going on with [her], because I don't want to be surprised.
I'll ask her, "How's S doing in his classwork?

3c. Parent or parent's behavior is important as a model for the child; parent interest and behaviors convey parent values to child; parent involvement activities convey to child parent's interest and valuing of school work, success, progress.

Examples: I think the way I handled the situation influenced her to pick what was more important.
I said to myself, too, "I can't be thinking negative about Chapter I, because he will sense it."
You've got to care about what they bring home.

Category 4: *Parent reports actions and behaviors reflecting parental belief that child's day-to-day education is the school's responsibility.*

4a. Parent waits for school or teacher to initiate communication, invite the parent to communicate; parent conveys the belief that there is little or no need for communication unless there's a problem; parent conveys a belief that the school or

teacher should let the parent know if there is a problem.

Examples: If the child's having a problem, at least notify the parents.
They haven't called us in for a meeting or anything.
If . . . the teacher is not noticing anything that she needs to inform me of, I would not feel slighted not to hear from her.

4b. Parent mentions that she/he (often passively) accepts, reinforces, has confidence in what the teacher says, does, expects; parent 'follows' the teacher or school lead; parents presents a 'united front,' supporting the school's primary role; includes simple mention of report cards as an accepted primary means of knowing about or 'evaluating' child's learning.

Examples: I asked her [the teacher] to please take care of it.
[I said to my child,] "So don't never think that just because you got in trouble, you're going to call Mama and Daddy and they're going to come down here and help get you out of trouble. Because if you did it, no."
Just send me a report card every six weeks.

4c. Parent mentions that child's progress and school work are primarily for the child and teacher or school to deal with; parent 'gets child ready' for school (supplies, etc.).

Examples: I can take no credit for their success this year. No, I've been sending them out the door, basically.
Make sure they get here, I guess.

Category 5. *Parent reports actions and behaviors reflecting parent belief that child's day-to-day education is served by parent-school partnership.*

5a. Parent mentions that teacher consults, works with the parent, or the parent works, consults with the teacher or school on day-to-day issues; consistent communication; parent values teacher or school suggestions and communications; includes parent-teacher conferences, unless conference was called by teacher for a specific problem about which the parent (apparently) had no prior knowledge.

Example: Me and her swap notes with each other if anything is going on with his schooling or anything like that.
Ms. X, she knows if she needs anything or if she has any questions that she can call me and ask me.
They told me little things that I could do as far as helping him with math, with beans and things like that.

5b. Parent mentions being supported (or wanting to be supported) by teacher or school; parent supports, likes, enjoys, 'knows' the school or teacher; parent approaches the school in a non-confrontational manner, seeks the school's 'side,' (works to) understand(s) school's perspective; includes mention of participation in open house, PTA meetings, lunch with child, attending field day, carnival; driving or going on field trip, etc.

Example: I really like this school.
I try not to step over the line, because I know teachers have a lot that they have to deal with.
His teacher was real great.

5c. Parent mentions volunteering, working at, contributing to the school (e.g., contributes supplies, volunteer teaching, major fundraising responsibilities, major work

with the PTA).

Example: I help the PE teacher a lot.
I would say last year I was here three or four times a week, and you know, anywhere from 30 minutes or longer a day.
I just went to whatever class they sent me to and helped the kids with their work or projects.

Parental role construction component: Parent's reported actions and behaviors related to major educational decisions or conflicts.

Category 6. *Parent reports actions, real or hypothetical, focused on parent's ultimate responsibility for problem identification, decision-making, service identification, evaluation of outcomes*; parent mentions that *parent* gets services, identifies problems, has (or wants to have) control over such decisions; may include mention of 'going over the teacher's head' as the *first* step in solving a problem that includes the teacher, or 'going over the teacher's head' if not satisfied with 'first-level' results may include *specific, personal* evaluation of services or outcomes or mention of parent's personal investment in outcomes (6a: real or actual situation; 6b: hypothetical situation)

Examples: I called her and came in and asked about the reading program . . . to see about getting in that Chapter I [program].
I told her also that if Ms. X persisted, that I would become an irate parent--and I would.
If [talking to the teacher] didn't work, I would just go higher up over her head.

Category 7. *Parent reports actions, real or hypothetical, focused on school's ultimate responsibility for problem identification, decision-making, service identification, evaluation of outcomes*; parent mentions the *school* getting services, identifying problems, initiating decision-making, the school having (or wanting the school to have) control of such decisions, responsibility for evaluating such services; assumption conveyed here is that the parent follows the school lead in these issues, that the school is in control (7a: real or actual situation; 7b: hypothetical situation).

Examples: [Interviewer question: Will C be in that special program all year?¡ Yeah, and from what Ms. X was telling me, T will be, too.
There was no holding him back, because they said that the teacher had the last say-so on that.
She said that she would find out for me what was going on and that she would put a stop to it.

Category 8. *Parent reports actions, real or hypothetical, focused on the joint responsibility of both parent and school or teacher for problem identification, decision-making, service identification, ond evaluation of outcomes*; parent mentions that *both* the teacher or school and the parent are or should be involved together in identifying problems, initiating decision-making, implementing solutions, having joint control of such decisions; may include *general positive evaluation* of outcomes; may include parent valuing a non-confrontational approach to solving the problem, a willingness to see the school's or teacher's 'side' of the situation; includes mention of working together, asking for a conference to discuss the issue, talking with the teacher as the *first* step in solving the (or most) problems; a sense of 'we-ness' and